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"THE GRAVE"

I

The "singularly impressive and almost appalling"¹ little poem commonly known by the title, "The Grave," is found in a well-preserved Oxford manuscript of hymns and sermons.² It covers a half-page of the manuscript, and is immediately preceded and followed by sermons—the first ending a little above the middle of the page, the second beginning at the top of the page following. The handwriting, which is of the twelfth century, is large and clear. The poem is written like prose without verse division, and on account of lack of space the last three lines are written on the margin in letters which are a trifle smaller than those in the rest of the poem. The appearance of the page suggests that the scribe had intended to fill exactly the half-sheet left blank but had miscalculated the space. On the remaining portion of the lower margin three verses have been added in a thirteenth-century hand. In these lines the writing is careless and the letters are not always distinct.

The poem was first edited by Conybeare in the London *Archaeologia* as an "inedited fragment of Anglo-Saxon poetry,"³ and was afterward reprinted in his *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* under the title, "Norman-Saxon Fragment on Death."⁴ In each volume the Middle English text was accompanied by Latin and English translations, the English translation being preceded by the words, "Death speaks." He did not print the thirteenth-century lines nor did he make any reference to them.

Thorpe, the next editor of the poem,⁵ printed the thirteenth-century verses as a part of the original text, though he stated in a footnote that they were "in a different and almost illegible hand."⁶

¹ Thorpe, *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, London, 1846, p. xi.

² MS Bodleian 343, f. 170.

³ XVII (1814), 173-75.

⁴ London, 1826, pp. 270-73.

⁵ *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, pp. 153-54.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

He gave it the title by which it is best known, "The Grave," and, like Conybeare, classed it as a fragment.

"The Grave" was first brought into connection with the body and soul literature by Max Rieger.¹ He compared it with the first speech in the "Visio Fulberti" on account of its use of the sentences: "Your house is not highly timbered, . . . its roof lies on your breast." "Loathsome is the earth-house where you shall live, and worms shall divide you." "You have no friend who will come to you, that he may see how that house pleases you."² And without coming to any positive conclusion he suggested that "The Grave" is a fragment of an early English adaptation of the "Visio." Later Rieger reprinted Thorpe's edition of "The Grave" as a "Bruchstück einer Rede der Seele an den Leichnam."³

The next contribution to the criticism of the poem was made by Kleinert,⁴ who pointed out the identity of certain lines in "The Grave" and the Worcester "Fragments of the Speeches of a Soul to Its Body." He argued that "The Grave" was the older text, and was therefore the source of the "Fragments."

Arnold Schröer, whose edition of the poem⁵ is the most satisfactory yet published, said nothing about its relation to the "Fragments." Accepting Thorpe's title, he edited the poem as "das unter dem titel 'The Grave' oder 'Fragment on Death' bekannte bruchstück eines alliterierenden gedichtes von der gattung der gespräche zwischen seele und leichnam." The three verses added in the thirteenth century he numbered as a continuation of the poem proper but he called attention to the distinction by means of a slight break in the text.

The most recent addition to the literature of the subject is Dr. Buchholz' book, *Die Fragmente der Reden der Seele an den Leichnam in zwei Handschriften zu Worcester und Oxford*.⁶ In it Schröer's text is reprinted, the three thirteenth-century lines being accepted

¹ "Zwei Gespräche zwischen Seele und Leib," Pfeiffer's *Germania*, III (1858), 396 ff. His discussion of "The Grave" is on p. 399.

² "The Grave," ll. 7, 10, 15-16, 18-19; cf. the "Visio," ed. du Ménil, *Poésies Populaires Latines antérieures au Douzième Siècle*, Paris, 1843, p. 221.

³ *Alt- und Angelsächsisches Lesebuch*, Giessen, 1861, pp. 124-25.

⁴ *Ueber den Streit zwischen Leib und Seele*, Halle dissertation, 1880, pp. 7 ff.

⁵ *Anglia*, V, 289-90.

⁶ *Erlanger Beiträge*, II, Heft VI, 1890.

as an integral part of the poem.¹ Regarding the relation of "The Grave" to the Worcester "Fragments" Buchholz reached no definite conclusion; he admitted two possibilities. The first is that "The Grave" is "a further fragment of the poem preserved in the Worcester 'Fragments.'" The second is that "The Grave" is a fragment of a poem different from the Worcester "Fragments."

As the result of this summary of the criticism of the poem, it is to be observed, (1) that every student of the poem has accepted it as a fragment of a longer poem, and (2) that since the point was first made no one has doubted that "The Grave" belongs to a speech of a soul to its body. Yet neither of these hypotheses, I venture to suggest, has been established.

I shall discuss first Dr. Buchholz' hypothesis that "The Grave" is a fragment of the poem preserved in the Worcester manuscript. Then I shall attempt to show that it does not necessarily belong to the body and soul literature, and that it is not a fragment.

II

Before bringing forward any evidence against Dr. Buchholz' theory of the relation of "The Grave" and the "Fragments," it may be pointed out that positive evidence in its favor is entirely wanting.²

¹ Such I take to be Dr. Buchholz' position. For, though he is careful to explain that these lines were added in a thirteenth-century hand (pp. iii, lxxv, 19), he nowhere differentiates against them either in the text or in the metrical and grammatical investigations of the poem. Curiously enough neither Schröer nor Buchholz considered the relation of the thirteenth-century lines to the remainder of the poem of sufficient importance to deserve comment or explanation.

² This theory has not, I think, met with a single favorable criticism. Cf. Kaluza: "Etwas Sicheres lässt sich über letzteres nicht feststellen; aber dass O nur ein weiteres Bruchstück des in den W-Fragmenten enthaltenen Gedichtes sein sollte, ist m. E. doch recht unwahrscheinlich. Die ganze Anlage ist in beiden Gedichten zu sehr verschieden, und da ich O dem Versbau nach für älter halte, so ist die Möglichkeit, dass O von dem Verfasser von W benutzt wurde, trotz Varnhagen keineswegs ausgeschlossen" (*Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie*, XII [1891], 15); and Bruce: "The relation between these two poems, the 'Fr.' and 'The Grave,' is so close as to have even led to the improbable suggestion that 'The Grave,' itself a fragment, was a part of the 'Fr.'" (*Modern Language Notes*, V [1890], 394); and Zupitza: "Dass einer Ausgabe der Bruchstücke zu Worcester das Oxfordbeigegeben wird, ist durch den offenbaren, wenn auch noch nicht erklärten, Zusammenhang der beiden Denkmäler gerechtfertigt" (Herrig's *Archiv*, LXXXV [1890], 78). Wüdkler agrees with Buchholz that nothing definite can be decided as to the relationship of "The Grave" and the "Fragments," without commenting on his suggestion that "The Grave" is one of the Worcester "Fragments." "Zunächst widerspricht B., und unseres erachtens mit vollem recht, der ansicht, man könne irgend etwas sicheres oder auch nur wahrscheinliches über das verhältniss von dem gedichte in W zu dem in O feststellen" (*Beiblatt zur Anglia*, I [1890], 183). Up to this time, however, Dr. Buchholz' theses have not been discussed in detail.

Dr. Buchholz' own arguments are negative. He prints together the passages from the two poems which are almost identical, and makes the statement that there must be a very close relation between them. "Es ist," he continues, "zunächst die Möglichkeit nicht ausgeschlossen" that "The Grave" is a further fragment of the Worcester poem. The objection that the poet would then have repeated himself in single expressions and in entire verses, he meets with the statement that such repetitions are found within the "Fragments." In conclusion he states that metrical considerations would present no obstacles in the way of such a solution of the problem.¹ I will discuss the last point first.

In meter the two poems are very much alike. Both contain the Old English alliterative verse with a preference for the line having only two alliterating syllables. In each there are lines without alliteration. In the "Fragments," however, there are a number of instances of rhyme,² whereas in "The Grave" there is no example of pure end rhyme.³ Any discussion of meter, then, must turn on this question of rhyme. Buchholz does not have anything to say about the matter, but Varnhagen has discussed it thoroughly in his review of Kleinert's dissertation.⁴ He calls attention to the impure rhymes in ll. 9 and 11 of "The Grave,"⁵ and suggests that the rhyme in them was intentional. In late Old English and in early Middle English, he says, alliteration and rhyme appear side by side but as a rule both are not found in one and the same verse, and, since the two lines in question are the only ones which do not show alliteration, the possibility that the rhyme was intentional is increased. Here Professor

¹ Dr. Buchholz' concluding statement would seem to indicate that he was not well informed about the manuscripts of the two poems: "Freilich Fragmente einer und derselben Hs. können W und O wegen des teilweise verschiedenen sprachlichen Characters nicht sein" (p. v).

² According to Buchholz' count (pp. lxx, lxxii) there are 19 verses that show rhyme, if we count the lines that are repeated each time they appear. Kaluza (*Literaturblatt*, XII, 16) thinks that the lines ending in *lif* and *siþ* should be counted as rhyming, thus adding ten verses to our list (A 30, 42, 44; C 15, 37; D 9, 16, 42; F 19; G 6).

³ Cf. Buchholz, p. lxxv.

⁴ *Anglia*, III, 573. Buchholz gives a reference to this review as showing that Kleinert's argument with regard to the greater age of "The Grave" is "nicht stichhaltig" (p. v).

⁵ "Ðe helewazes beoð laze, siðwazes unheze" (l. 9). "Swa ðu scealt on molde wunien ful calde" (l. 11). There is a third example of impure rhyme in l. 23, but I am not considering the thirteenth-century lines in my discussion of the poem.

Varnhagen has made a mistake. There is no alliteration in l. 15.¹ We may raise the question also whether Professor Varnhagen has not since changed his opinion on this subject, for his pupil, Dr. Buchholz, fails to recognize an impure rhyme in l. 9, and considers it doubtful that the rhyme in l. 11 was intentional.²

But, Professor Varnhagen continues, even if the rhyme in "The Grave" was not intentional, the presence of rhyme cannot be taken as an exact indication of age, even though it is found only sporadically in the oldest texts and becomes increasingly more common in the later ones. "Aber ist es denn bewiesen, dass das wachsende eindringen desselben ein so stetiges, nie unterbrochenes gewesen ist, dass man ohne weiteres zu dem schlusse berechtigt ist, dass, wenn ein text denselben öfter zeigt, als ein anderer, der erstere der ältere ist? Ist es nicht vielmehr wahrscheinlicher, dass auch hier die action zeitweise durch eine reaction unterbrochen ist?" Then as an example of this reaction he cites two poems from the *Old English Chronicle*. The poem on the death of Alfred, son of Aethelred, is probably some thirty years older than that on the death of Edward, yet rhyme is found in the first poem and not in the second.

In the same review Professor Varnhagen treats Kleinert's argument from the language of the poems with equal scorn, though more briefly. Kleinert had said: "Vergleicht man jedoch in den angeführten Stellen Sprache und Wortbildung, so wird man bei den schwereren, volleren Endungen der Verba und überhaupt dem breiten, vollen Vokalismus im Riegerschen Texte einräumen müssen, dass dieser der ältere sein muss."³ Varnhagen's comment is as follows: "für Kl. sind entstehungszeit einer hs. und entstehungszeit des betr. denkmals identisch. Auf den sonstigen inhalt dieses passus und mehrere ausdrücke in demselben gehe ich nicht weiter ein."⁴

I have taken up the question of language here in connection with that of meter, because, it seems to me, the same criticism is to be made of both. Professor Varnhagen's position is, in each case, unassailable. The manuscripts are responsible for the differences in language, and the presence of rhyme is not necessarily an

¹ See Buchholz, p. lxxvi.

² P. lxxvi and note 1.

³ P. 8. See Buchholz' analyses of the language of the two poems, pp. vi-lxii.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 573.

indication of age. But when we have granted these points, have we established anything with regard to the relative dates of the two poems? Have we even disproved Kleinert's argument?

The language of a poem is determined by the date of the manuscript in which it appears, but, other data failing, differences in the dates of manuscripts are counted indicative of differences in the dates of composition. And in the present case other data are lacking and the language of "The Grave" is the older. The case of the meter is very similar. In "The Grave" we may have the product of one of the periods of reaction against rhyme. Professor Varnhagen, however, brings forward no evidence to prove that such was the case, and he himself says that as a rule the poem with rhyme is not so old as the one without it. So that while we agree with Varnhagen that the present instances may be exceptions to the rules, we must, nevertheless, admit that we have no reasons for counting them exceptions, and hence we suppose that they conform to the general rules. The evidence of language and meter, then, is not in itself conclusive, but whatever weight it does have is against the theory that "The Grave" is one of the Worcester "Fragments."

Dr. Buchholz' first argument demands more serious consideration. There are repetitions within the "Fragments."¹ Most important is the repetition of the lines:

Al is reowliche þin siþ efter þin wrecche lif.²

and

Deo swetnesse is nu al agon, þet bittere þe biþ fornon;
þet bittere ilaestep æffre, þet swete ne cumeþ þe naeffre.³

These lines form two refrains which are repeated at irregular intervals throughout the poem. They are not found in "The Grave." And since they are of the nature of refrains the repetition of them is not comparable to the identity of single phrases and verses in the "Fragments" and "The Grave."

¹ Dr. Buchholz did not note the lines in which the repetitions to which he refers occur. I cannot, therefore, be certain of his data.

² C 15. This line is found with variations in A 30, C 37, D 9, D 16, D 42, F 19, and G 6.

³ B 44-45; cf. also D 40-41 and B 8.

There are also repetitions of single phrases and sentences within the Worcester "Fragments." The list of such repetitions which I have found is as follows:¹

Liggeþ þe ban stille. A 21.

Liggeþ þe bon stille. E 11.

Ac aefre þu gaederedest gaersume on þine feonde. C 12.

Oþre birefedest rihtes istreones,

Gaederedest to gaersume. G 12-13.

Him scortep þe tunge. A 19.

Ðin tunge is ascorted. G 9.

Eart þu nu loþ ond unwurþ alle þine freonden. B 37.

Ðu ert forbunden ond loþ alle freonden.² F 17.

Do these repetitions within the "Fragments" parallel the identical lines in "The Grave" and the "Fragments" so closely as to make it possible to consider "The Grave" a part of the Worcester poem? The resemblances are not so close, nor are the lines themselves so important. Besides, this list does not explain the repetition of several lines in succession as in "The Grave," ll. 7-11, and Fragment C, 29-32.

Moreover, if we examine the list of repetitions within the "Fragments," we shall find that they are scattered here and there through the poem as is natural when an author is repeating himself. The same is true of the lines in the "Fragments" which are paralleled in "The Grave." But the converse is not true. The lines in question in "The Grave" are consecutive. Turning to the list of identical lines which Buchholz has printed in his preface, we find they are ll. 5, 6, 7-11, 13, 14, 16, 17.

We may grant that a poet might repeat important lines in a single poem. We may even grant, for the sake of argument, that a poet might repeat several such lines together. But can we, at the same time, grant that a poet would collect sentences from various parts of his poem and construct a new paragraph from them? or that he would tear one of his own paragraphs into its component sentences and

¹ Lines B 12, B 38, and C 24 should not be counted among these repetitions.

² This is the only one of these lines which is found in "The Grave." The line there is: "Ðus þu bist ilejð and ladaest þine fronden" (l. 17).

scatter them throughout the remainder of his poem?¹ In other words, though such a procedure as the theory of Buchholz involves is possible, it does not seem at all probable. But on the other hand, if the author of the "Fragments" used "The Grave" as one of his sources, and borrowed from it entire verses, he would very naturally scatter them in his poem, even though they were consecutive in the original. All the evidence drawn from this scrutiny of the two poems, therefore, favors the theory that "The Grave" was the source of the "Fragments" and opposes Dr. Buchholz' hypothesis that it is a part of the Worcester poem.

III

We have now to consider the relation of "The Grave" to the body and soul literature. Is our poem a part of a soul's speech to its body? On what evidence does this, the usual interpretation, rest?²

It is not stated in the poem that the soul is speaking, and no *anima dicit* appears in the manuscript. Yet these means of identification are usually found in the body and soul poems. Neither does "The Grave" contain any of the typical body and soul motives. There is no upbraiding of the body, no hint of any past sins, the body is not even identified as that of a righteous man or a sinner. Nor was the poem said to belong to a speech of a soul to its body because it was recognized as especially appropriate to such a speech. "The Grave" was first identified with the body and soul poems because it contained motives found in the "Visio Fulberti," and scholars have continued to count it among those poems because of its obviously close relation to the Worcester "Fragments."³

¹ This point tells seriously against the theory of a common source as suggested by Varnhagen (*Anglia*, III, 572).

² It may be well to call attention to the fact that in the following discussion the question of importance is the meaning of the poem itself, and not the meaning of the "Fragments" as affected by "The Grave." Dr. Buchholz, for example, considers only the question whether "The Grave" may not be one of the "Fragments." And Professor Bruce asks if the addition of "The Grave" would "do prejudice to its [the "Fragments"] claims to artistic merit" (*op. cit.*, p. 394). No one, I think, has studied "The Grave's" relation to the "Fragments," or to the body and soul literature, from the point of view of the artistic demands of "The Grave" itself.

³ This point assumes especial significance when it is remembered that Thorpe and Conybeare, who were studying the poem and not the body and soul legend, failed to identify "The Grave" with the legend, though they were well acquainted with it. The same is true of the poet Longfellow.

Such an identification is, however, purely mechanical and argues little as to the general import of the poem.¹ Especially is this true in the case of so popular a legend as that of the body and soul, a legend, moreover, which borrowed motives from all kinds of religious literature, as for example the description of the Last Judgment,² or the enumeration of the Fifteen Signs before the Judgment.³

And if we examine the motives concerned in the present case, we shall not find any indications that they belong to a speech of a soul to its body. The motive of the loathsomeness of a dead man to his relatives and the worm motive may be dismissed at once since they obviously are not native to body and soul literature.⁴ Of the remaining lines of the Oxford text which are repeated in the Worcester poem, one verse does not appear in any of the speeches of the soul, but forms a part of the general introduction to the poem.⁵ It could not, therefore, have been recognized as especially appropriate to the speech of a soul to its body. In another the meaning is changed; the half-line which in the Oxford poem refers directly to the grave is, in the "Fragments," introduced so as to refer to the dead body, and is thus made suitable for the soul's speech.⁶ Where the lines in the Worcester

¹ The fallacy of such a mode of reasoning may be illustrated from within the body and soul literature itself. In the "Samedi" (ed. Varnhagen, *Erlanger Beiträge*, I, Anhang I, P text, ll. 785 ff. and 919 ff.) the body tells the soul that Beelzebub will not give up one soul for all the treasures of earth, and that the greater one is on earth the more he must suffer in hell. In the "Visio Fulberti" (*op. cit.*, p. 227) the soul uses this argument in addressing the body. In the Old English "Address" (Grein-Wülker, *Bibliothek*, II, 102, ll. 110 ff.) a description of the corruption of the body is introduced by the author after the soul's speech is ended, though short references had been included in the soul's speech. In the "Samedi" (ll. 350 ff.) the detailed description forms a part of the soul's speech. In "Death" (ed. Morris, *Old English Miscellany*, pp. 180-81 ff.) the description of Satan is not unlike that of the demons in the "Visio Fulberti" (p. 227). In the "Visio," however, the demons are introduced as real beings, in "Death" the description forms a part of the soul's speech.

² Cf. "Samedi," ll. 459 ff.

³ MS Harl. 2253, f. 57 ff., ed. by Bölddeker, pp. 235 ff., and by Wright, *Walter Map*, pp. 346 ff.

⁴ Cf. "The Grave," ll. 16, 17; and "Fragments," C 28, F 17, and B 37.

⁵ "The Grave," l. 6; "Fragments," A 34.

⁶ "The Grave":

"Dureleas is þæt hus and dearc hit is wiðinnen.
Ðær þu bist feste bidytt and dæð hefð þa cæþe" (ll. 13-14);

"Fragments":

"Noldest þu mid muþe bidden me none miltse.
Nu þu ert adumbod ond deap haueþ þe keþe" (F 15-16).

A similar change has taken place in the case of "The Grave," l. 5, and the "Fragments," B 39.

poem keep the same meaning as in "The Grave," they are introduced with details which make them easily recognizable as belonging to the angry soul's speech of reproach.¹ The same is true of the "Visio Fulberti" when it introduces motives found in "The Grave."² In "The Grave" itself, however, these touches are lacking.

In fact, whenever the motives of "The Grave" appear in the body and soul literature—for they are by no means confined to the "Fragments" and the "Visio Fulberti"—they are but importations. They are not intrinsic parts of a soul's speech to its body; they cannot be introduced for themselves. If, for example, the soul is upbraiding the body for its sins on earth, there is no occasion for the introduction of a description of the decayed body. When such a description is introduced, therefore, it is with modifying phrases,

¹ Cf. "The Grave," ll. 7-12:

"Ne bið no þin hus healice itinbred;
Hit bið unheh and lah, þonne þu list perinne.
Ðe helewæses beoð laze, siðwæses unheze;
Ðe rof bið ibyld þire broste ful neh.
Swa ðu scealt on molde wunien ful calde,
Dimme and deorcae."

with the corresponding passage in the "Fragments," C 25-36:

"Noldest þu nefre helpen þam orlease wrecchen;
Ac þu sete on þine benche, underleld mid þine bolstre;
Þu wurpe cneow ofer cneow. Ne icneowe þu þe sulfen,
Þet þu scoldest mid wurmen wunien in eorþan.
Nu þu hauest neowe hus, inne bebrungen;
Leowe beoþ þe helewowes, unheze beoþ þe siðwowes;
Þin rof liþ on þine breoste ful neh.
Colde is þe ibedded, cloþes bideled.
Nulleþ þine hinen cloþes þe senden,
For heom puncheþ al to lut, þet þu heom bilefdest;
Þet þu hefdest onhorded, hit wulleþ heldan.
Ðus is iwtan þin weole; wendest þet hit þin were."

Cf. in this connection two later Middle English writings which contain almost the exact words of "The Grave," although they do not belong to the body and soul literature. In the first, a poem, "Die Boten des Todes" (ed. by Kaluza, *Englische Studien*, XIV [1890], 184 ff.), the lines are as follows:

"De halle rof is cast ful lowe;
Der beoþ none chaumbres wyde.
Me may reche þe helewowe
And þe wal on vch a syde" (ll. 153-56).

The second reference is found in the Lazarus play of the Towneley cycle. Here the expression is not so nearly kin to that of "The Grave" as in the poem just quoted:

"Vnder the erthe ye shall thus carefully then cowche;
The roye of youre hall youre nakyd nose shall towche."
(*E. E. T. S.*, *E. S.*, LXXI, 391, 135-36).

Many of the other death and grave motives that have been borrowed by the body and soul poems are also to be found in this play and in the poem cited above.

Cf. also "The Grave," ll. 11-16, with the "Fragments," B 39-43 and E 4-13.

² "Tua domus qualiter modo tibi placet,
Cujus nonne summitas super nasum jacet?
Nullum membrum superest quod jam lucro vacet,
jam clauduntur oculi, lingua tua tacet."

—(Ed. du Ménil, p. 221).

Cf. also the following stanzas.

as, "although you dressed in fine clothes here, you shall be eaten by worms," or "although you, body, be entirely destroyed, you shall not evade your share of the punishment we must endure at the Judgment." In "The Grave," as I have said, the motives in question are introduced without such application. The grave is described merely because of the horror the description arouses. And in this respect our poem offers marked contrast to the body and soul literature.

Moreover, the whole tone of "The Grave" is different from that of the body and soul poems. The speeches of the soul are expressions of keen remorse and of personal regret. "The Grave," on the other hand, is calmly descriptive and universal, philosophic in tone. In the speeches of the soul the power lies in the recognition of the fact that the miserable plight described could have been avoided, it was the result of sin.¹ The power of "The Grave" lies in the fact that it is describing the fate of everyone, saint as well as sinner. The speeches of the soul are, in effect, sermons calling to repentance; "The Grave" is only a picture, without the application of the moral.

IV

It is difficult to know how to prove that our poem is not a fragment. The weight of proof usually rests with the other side, and we consider a poem complete unless there is reason for believing that some part is lacking. But no one has ever given any reason for counting "The Grave" fragmentary. The first editor, Conybeare, merely stated that the poem was a fragment, and that statement has been accepted without question.²

There can be but two valid reasons for counting a poem a fragment. If the manuscript is torn or mutilated, or if there is manuscript evidence of any other kind to show that a part of the poem is lacking, it must be considered a fragment. Or, if the sense of the poem is obviously incomplete, it should be counted fragmentary. Neither of these reasons holds true of "The Grave."

¹ Cf., for contrast, the speeches of the good soul in Batiouchkof's homily (*Romania*, XX, 578), and in the Old English "Address" (*op. cit.*, p. 105 ff.).

² A good deal of the confusion on this point is undoubtedly due to the use of the words "margin" by Thorpe (*op. cit.*, p. xi) and *rande* by Max Rieger (*Alt- und Angelsächsisches Lesebuch*, p. 124) in describing the half-sheet of the manuscript on which the poem appears.

The three lines added in the thirteenth century form the only bit of manuscript evidence which might indicate that the poem is not complete. Of course, if these lines are to be counted a part of the original poem, it is undoubtedly a fragment. But if we consider the question on its merits, we find no reason for accepting the three lines. From the point of view of content they destroy the unity of the poem, as I shall attempt to show later. And from the point of view of the manuscript, it is much more probable that the thirteenth-century scribe was "completing" or "improving" the twelfth-century poem by the addition of lines of his own, than that he was adding verses of the original poem.¹

If we count the thirteenth-century lines spurious, there is no manuscript evidence against my theory that we have in "The Grave" a complete poem. The manuscript is in excellent condition, and there is no evidence of careless or interrupted writing in our poem.² It was, indeed, written on a half-sheet left between two sermons, but in such a case would not a scribe be more likely to write a complete short poem than a fragment of a long one? In fact, the lettering seems to indicate that he did choose the short poem. As I have said,³ the last lines of "The Grave" are written on the margin of the page, and in them the letters are slightly smaller than in the remainder of the poem. If the scribe were only filling a half-page with a fragment of a poem, he would have no motive for making the letters on the margin smaller, or for writing on the margin at all, since his poem at best would be but a fragment. If, however, he wished to write a short poem in a given space, he would naturally make his letters smaller when that space was filled, that he might be certain to get in the remaining lines of the poem, and at the same time leave the page as neat and with as wide a margin as possible.

The question rests, then, entirely on a consideration of the contents of "The Grave." If the three thirteenth-century lines are

¹ I do not mean that these three lines were, necessarily, original with the thirteenth-century scribe. Obviously they reflect commonplaces in mediaeval death and grave literature; but they were not a part of the original poem.

² A possible exception may be made in the case of l. 21. The first half of it, according to the modern editors, has been omitted. In the manuscript, however, there is no break indicating an omission.

³ See above, p. 1.

counted, the poem seems to be fragmentary. In those lines the scribe has reproduced admirably the spirit of the poem, but he has destroyed its unity. For in them he has introduced details about the appearance of the corpse, whereas it is only the general condition of the body with direct reference to the future "house" which is mentioned in the poem itself. They leave one with a sense of incompleteness, too. One expects other details about the eyes, nose, and mouth to follow the reference to the hair.

The poem as written by the twelfth-century writer, however, does not appeal to me as unfinished or fragmentary. It takes a single theme, the description of the grave as the future house of man, and in the twenty-two verses this theme is given a well-rounded development. The second person is used throughout for emphasis.¹ Opening with the statement that there is such a future house for each one, the author follows with a description of that house and of man's condition in it. "It is small, it is cheerless, you will be a prey to worms therein." The poem then concludes with a reference to the man's relation to his friends when in his new home. "Your friends will not care to come to you, to see how that house pleases you, for soon you will be loathsome to look upon."²

The last lines have a haunting quality; they are like the last notes of a song written in a minor key. But the poem is not to be called incomplete, or unfinished, on that account. Instead, the ending is a proof of the poet's art. For in it he has not only emphasized the chief point of the poem, man's miserable and hopeless condition in the grave, but he has done so in the most effective way. We are left, not with a vivid picture of the corruption of the grave, but with a haunting sense of its inevitableness, its utter misery, and its entire hopelessness.

In conclusion, if we admit that "The Grave" is not a fragment, my earlier point about its relation to the body and soul literature is greatly strengthened. So long as the poem is considered fragmentary, we must grant that it may be a part of a soul's speech to

¹ Conybeare precedes his English translation with the words, "Death speaks." I do not feel that any definite speaker is intended. The second person is used to mean that every individual is addressed. Cf. the poem on "Signs of Death" in Morris' *Old English Miscellany*, p. 101.

² L. 21 should be followed by a comma, and not by a period as in Buchholz' edition.

its body. The references identifying it positively as such may always be in some of the lost fragments. If the poem is complete, however, it is clear that it does not belong to the class of body and soul poems, but to the even more popular class of death and grave literature.

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